



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

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Coastal Commission Approves Coastal Development Permit for City's Marina Park Project

NEWPORT BEACH, Ca. -- The City of Newport Beach cleared a significant regulatory hurdle yesterday when the California Coastal Commission unanimously approved the Marina Park project's coastal development permit, and essentially cleared the way for the City to build a new bay front park and marina.

Newport Beach Mayor Nancy Gardner said, "A project designed to open up 10 acres of waterfront land for a public park is extremely rare in Southern California and we feel privileged to have this opportunity in Newport Beach. We appreciate the Coastal Commission's support and are particularly grateful for the many residents who worked so long and hard on this project."

The new, public park, known locally as Marina Park, will include a 23,832-square-foot multi-purpose community and sailing program building; greater accessibility to a large, public bay front beach; a 5,500-square-foot Girl Scout building; a new visitor-serving marina consisting of 23 slips and a 200-foot-long side tie area; park amenities including basketball half-courts, a children's play area and new restrooms; and a 157-space public parking area.

Marina Park is located on the Balboa Peninsula, just off of Balboa Boulevard generally between 15th and 18th Streets. The City has owned the site for decades, but began actively planning the park immediately following the defeat of a 2004 ballot measure that would have allowed a hotel there. The Protect Our Parks group fought the hotel measure and has remained active in Marina Park's planning to this day (the current design is based on the Protect our Parks vision).

A 50-year-old mobile home park currently occupies a large portion of the site. As a part of the mobile home park closure process outlined in California law, the residents of the approximately 52 coaches located on the site entered into a Settlement Agreement with the City in 2007.

Under that agreement, the City purchased their coaches (for \$35,000 each) and slightly lowered the rent for the remainder of the residents' stay on the property. The City and residents have regularly communicated during the past five years, as the project moved through various phases of planning and permitting. The coaches and other structures will be removed to prepare the site for park construction. The Settlement Agreement outlines the steps and timing for coaches to be removed, and includes issuance of permits and identifying construction funding, all followed by a 90-day notice.

City Manager Dave Kiff said, "The residents of Marina Park have been troopers throughout these times. They love where they live – and appropriately so. It's a wonderful place. They have my admiration for how they have handled this process."

Construction cost estimates are subject to final design work and bidding, but may range from \$20-28 million. The construction period is estimated to be about two years. The construction start date is yet to be determined and will be based in part on the Settlement Agreement and the City's interest in minimizing construction during heavy tourism seasons (summer and Christmas). Coastal Development Permits generally have a two-year window to start construction.

Council member Mike Henn, who represents the Marina Park area, said, "This is a big day that brings us nearer to a really wonderful community project. The park at Marina Park will be one that many generations in the neighborhood will treasure and call their own."